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“Idaho’s Iconic Trailing of the Sheep Festival Celebrates 30 Years in 2026” One of the World’s Most Unique Cultural Festivals is All About Sheep

Sheep have been trailing through the Wood River Valley of Idaho for well over a century-and-a-half and are an integral part of Idaho’s western heritage. And for the past three decades, Idaho’s iconic [Trailing of the Sheep Festival](#) has celebrated the sheep, herders, history, and food of this unique tradition. The Festival, recognized as one of the “Top Ten Fall Festivals in the World” by *msn.com*, will celebrate its 30th anniversary October 7-11, 2026, with five days of unique events held throughout the Sun Valley area of Idaho.

Each fall, the Trailing of the Sheep Festival honors the 150+ year annual tradition of moving sheep (‘trailing’) from high mountain summer pastures down through the Valley to traditional winter grazing and lambing areas in the south. This annual migration is living history and the focus of a unique and authentic Festival that celebrates the people, arts, cultures, and traditions of Idaho’s sheep ranching families, highlighting the principal contributors – the Basques, Scottish, and Peruvians.

While the Festival has expanded greatly from its humble beginnings 30 years ago, the goals and objectives of the Festival remain the same—preserving the stories and history of sheep ranchers and herders, celebrating the rich cultures of the past and present, and entertaining and educating children and adults about the production of local food and fiber that have sustained local economies for generations.

The five-day Trailing of the Sheep Festival includes nonstop activities in multiple venues - history, folk arts, an authentic Sheep Folklife Fair, lamb culinary offerings, Wool Fest classes, music, storytelling, National Qualifying Sheepdog Trials and, the always entertaining, Big Sheep Parade with over 1,200 sheep hoofing it down Main Street in Ketchum.

2026 Festival Highlights include:

- [Big Sheep Parade](#) with over 1,200 sheep trailing down Main Street in Ketchum, Idaho.
- [National Qualifying Sheepdog Trials](#) featuring eighty of the country’s most talented border collies, and other trained herding breeds, with their handlers competing for top awards.
- [Sheep Folklife Fair](#) featuring Basque, Scottish, and Peruvian dancers and musicians, sheep shearing demonstrations, over eighty sheep and wool product vendors, and children’s activities.
- [Sheep Tales Gathering](#) featuring “*A Taste of Basque: Then to Now & There to Here.*” The esteemed, James Beard nominated Boise chef – Dan Ansotegui – along with two of his Basque chef colleagues, will present the story of Basque food – from the old country to the hybrid servings in the boarding houses for the Basque sheep herders, to the “American Basque” or modern Basque foods of today.

- [Culinary Events](#) including For the Love of Lamb dine-around, Lamb Fest at the Folklife Fair, Cooking with Lamb classes, a Cheese Making class, and Farm to Table Lamb Dinners featuring Idaho lamb from local area ranchers.
- [Wool Fest](#) featuring over twenty classes and workshops on creating with wool.
- [Happy Trails Closing Party](#) in Ketchum Town Square (before and after the Big Sheep Parade) featuring vendors, food, and live music.

For the detailed schedule, tickets, and lodging deals, visit www.trailingofthesheep.org.

The 2026 Big Sheep Parade is sponsored by the City of Ketchum, Thurston Charitable Foundation, and Jay Cutler Event Services, with many other supporters, volunteers and friends bringing the entire Festival to fruition.

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History of the Trailing of the Sheep Festival: <https://trailingofthesheep.org/history/>

Accolades for the Trailing of the Sheep Festival

The Trailing of the Sheep Festival has garnered some well-deserved accolades over the years, including being recognized as one of the **Top Ten Fall Festivals in the World** by *msn.com travel*, **Top Ten US Fall Festivals** by *smartertravel.com*, **Top Animal Festivals in the World** and **Top Ten Fall Festivals** by *USA Today*, **Top 7 Fun Fall Festivals** by *AARP*, **One of the Greatest Cultural Events in the West** by *Northwest Travel*, and recipient of the Society of American Travel Writer's **Phoenix Award** for best in cultural tourism, and the **Idaho Governor's Award for Cultural Heritage**.

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IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE HERE: <https://trailingofthesheep.org/media/photo-gallery/>

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

This unique cultural Festival is recognized as one of the best in the world.
We are proud of the recognition received from many top media outlets and through numerous important awards.



TOP 10 FALL FESTIVALS IN THE WORLD



TOP 7 BEST FALL FESTIVALS IN THE US



10 AMAZING FALL FESTIVALS WORTH A ROAD TRIP



10 GREAT ANIMAL FESTIVALS IN WORLD



TEN BEST FALL FESTIVALS IN US



TOP 10 FALL FESTIVALS IN US



7 FUN FALL FESTIVALS ACROSS THE US



9 FALL FESTIVALS WORTH TRAVELING FOR



BUCKET LIST FALL EVENTS



TOP FOODIE FESTS IN THE WEST



TOP CULTURAL EVENTS IN THE WEST



TOP 10 FALL FESTIVALS



AMERICA'S WACKIEST FALL FESTIVALS



TOP OFFBEAT OCTOBER FESTIVALS



24 TOP FALL & HARVEST FESTIVALS IN THE U.S. - JUNE 2022



ONE OF TOP AMAZING FESTIVALS



SATW PHOENIX AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CULTURAL TOURISM PRESERVATION



ID GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE



CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION AWARD



TOP AWESOME AUTUMN FESTS IN US



BEST FESTIVAL 2016-2024